**RECOGNITION OF DISTINCTION 2024**

**PROCEDURES FOR CONFERMENT OF THE TITLE OF FULL PROFESSOR**

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# Introduction

Applications have been are invited for the 2024 Recognition of Distinction exercise to confer the title of full professor at the University of Oxford. The opening date for applications is **Monday 27th November 2023** and the closing date will be **12pm** **on Thursday 18th January 2024**

The criteria, information on eligibility, and list of required documents, including references, are set out in the Information for Applicants.

Conferment of the title of professor will have no implications for the duties of the individual concerned. Titles take effect immediately the decision is notified. Successful applicants whose substantive post is in one of the University Associate Professor grades, Grades 9 and 10, or who are Keepers in GLAM*,* will receive an increase to their salary of £3,078 per annum (August 2023 rates) from 1 October 2024 (unless they already receive recruitment or retention payments, or have discretionary increments at this level or above) and will also be eligible for consideration in professorial merit pay exercises.

Divisional boards may confer the title of visiting professor on an individual who is not an Oxford University employee if it is considered that the individual more appropriately fits that category and is of appropriate distinction.

# Overview of Consideration of Applications

Applications will be considered by a Recognition of Distinction Committee in each academic division on behalf of Divisional Boards. Recommendations will be made by the Recognition of Distinction Committees to the Senior Appointments Panel of the University’s Personnel Committee which consists of the Vice-Chancellor (chair); the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and GLAM), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Senior Appointments Panel will review the divisional recommendations and supporting documentation. It may seek further information, consideration or comment from the divisional committees. It will ratify the recommendations when it is satisfied that proper procedures have been followed and that standards have been applied consistently. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome and titles will take effect immediately.

# Process for the Recognition of Distinction exercise 2024

## 3.1 Preparations within Divisions

***a) Publicising the exercise***

From Michaelmas Term Divisions will publicise the forthcoming exercise to all those divisional staff eligible to apply. This includes drawing the attention of all eligible candidates to the exercise, and publicising any briefing sessions in the division. In publicising the exercise the division will draw attention to any groups under-represented at full professorial level in that division, emphasising that it would especially welcome applications from those groups. Composition of the divisional committee should be made available once known.

***b) The Divisional Committee***

i) Set up Divisional Recognition of Distinction Committees and arrange dates.

Divisional Committees, normally chaired by the head of division, should be broadly based, covering as far as possible the major disciplines or broad areas of study under the aegis of the particular board. The members of the divisional committees should comprise only statutory or *ad personam* professors, those holding the title of professor, and heads of department/faculty board chairs.

ii) Publish the composition of the divisional Recognition of Distinction committee on the divisional website and pass a list of members to Central HR for publication in the *Gazette*.

***c) Receipt of Applications***

i) Receive applications and references requested by applicants by the published closing date in Hilary Term.

ii) Divisional committees then:

* Assess the eligibility of applications from individuals not employed by the University and inform them of the outcome. Those judged ineligible will not be considered further.
* Agree the names of [independent research assessors](#_4.2_References_and) for each applicant.
* Plan consultation with divisional committees in other academic divisions. where an individual’s research spans more than one division. Particularly careful consideration (especially in relation to the seeking of independent assessors) should be given to applicants whose work is interdisciplinary.
* In the case of applications based in Continuing Education or GLAM, plan for the divisional committee to obtain appropriate input from Continuing Education or GLAM.

Any external committee members should be invited to contribute to decisions on independent assessors and the eligibility of applicants who are not employees, but do not necessarily have to attend any initial meetings provided that they are fully consulted (i.e. invited to send in views beforehand and to comment afterwards on the decisions before any action is taken).

## 3.2 Application Papers

The papers seen by the divisional committee (and later the Senior Appointments Panel) will consist of the application, references from the head of department/faculty board chair and head of house where appropriate, and the independent evaluations sought by the divisional committee. The divisional committees may, however, seek supplementary information, as they see necessary, in order to reach fair and consistent recommendations.

Heads of Department/Faculty Board Chairs are asked to confirm that applicants uphold appropriate standards of professional behaviour, including that they comply with key University people policies, for example but not limited to EDI, harassment & bullying, and academic integrity.

In addition to the references arranged by applicants, divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will seek at least two/three additional independent evaluations for each applicant which focus on the extent to which applicants meet the research criterion.

The combination of research reference and independent evaluations should be sufficient to give the clearest evidence as to whether the research criterion has been met, noting that that criterion requires a research record at least equal in distinction to that expected of those appointed to full professorships at other leading international research universities. The independent assessors may also address the teaching and/or the good citizenship criteria if they wish to do so.

Where it has not proved possible for a division to obtain at least two additional independent evaluations within the timescale of the exercise, consideration of the application will be suspended by the divisional committee. A minimum of 4 external assessors will be approached to give evaluations. Divisions inform any applicants for whom fewer than two independent evaluations were received that it was not possible to consider their application, on or before the day of the divisional committee meeting.

## Divisional Recommendations

i) Divisional committees meet in Trinity Term to review applications and agree their recommendations to the Senior Appointments Panel. Any external committee members must be present at this meeting. Each application must be assessed strictly by reference to the [criteria](#_Criteria_for_Conferment), taking into account any [disclosures of personal circumstances](#_4.1_Disclosure_of) submitted by applicants and comments from other divisions on interdisciplinary applicants. Retention issues should not be taken into account. The divisional committee may seek supplementary information, as it sees necessary, in order to reach fair and consistent recommendations.

ii) In line with DORA principles, a candidate’s research and publication profile, research outputs and other research contributions should be assessed on their intrinsic merit. Inappropriate use of proxies or metrics – such as the title or impact factor of the journal in which the work was published, is discouraged. Committee members’ attention should be drawn to the DORA principles. An explanation of the changes to the procedures should be provided, which have been designed to meet the requirements of DORA whilst also ensuring that this is balanced with what the Committee can be realistically expected to review.

iii) When considering a candidate’s research and publication profile relative to the criteria, any career breaks should be taken into consideration in assessing the size of that candidate’s body of work. Circumstances such as caring responsibilities for children or other family members, ill health or disability may result in the quantity of applicants’ outputs being less than might otherwise be expected, but the quality of the outputs should be judged in the usual way. This method is used to judge research excellence for REF. However, candidates are still expected to have produced a sufficient body of work for their merit to be fairly assessed.The MRC have a guide to assessing funding applications from those who have taken career breaks which is included here for information: <https://www.mrc.ac.uk/documents/pdf/career-breaks-and-flexible-working-guidance/>.

iv) Divisional committees forward recommendations to the Senior Appointments Panel including a statistical analysis of diversity with regard to application and success rates, noting any statistical or other anomalies of which the committee was aware, and any explanation for such anomalies. For each applicant the report should include:

* The applicant’s job title.
* The number of external evaluations taken into account (where insufficient independent evaluations were received, a note to this effect).
* A summary of the committee’s evaluation against each criterion.
* A recommendation as to whether the title of full professor should be conferred or not. Where the recommendation is to confer the title, and the applicant has not indicated that he or she wishes not to use the title, the committee should recommend the title they consider appropriate.
* A note of whether personal circumstances were disclosed and taken into account.
* For interdisciplinary applicants, a note on whether other divisions were consulted.
* All documentation considered by the divisional committee including the application, any disclosure of personal circumstances and all references/evaluations.

## Senior Appointments Panel

i) Meet in Late Trinity Term/Long Vacation *to* review the documentation provided by each divisional committee and demographics of applications and success rates across the university to ensure proper procedure and consistent application of standards across divisions.

ii) Either ratify the recommendations, or

iii) Seek further information, consideration or comment from the divisional committees and ratify the recommendations when it is satisfied that proper procedures have been followed and that standards have been applied consistently.

iv) During the long vacation, divisional committees provide any further information or comment if requested by the Senior Appointments Panel

# Outcomes

## Notifying and Processing Outcomes

i) Divisions inform departments/faculties of the outcomes.

ii) Individuals will be notified of the outcome of their application by the divisions

ii) Central HR arrange for titles to be recorded in the HR system and for payments to take effect from 1 October for those successful applicants who are eligible for additional payments (those in the Associate Professor and GLAM Keeper grades who are awarded the title, unless they already receive recruitment or retention payments at this level or above).

iii) A list of successful applicants may be published on divisional and/or departmental/faculty websites once the outcomes for all candidates in the division/department/faculty are known.

## 4.2 Other action after the conclusion of the exercise

i) A list of those on whom the title of full professor has been conferred will be published in the *Gazette* at the start of the following Michaelmas Term. (It is important that departments/faculties and colleges do not publish details of successful applicants on their websites until all their applicants have been informed of the outcome.)

ii) A report on the outcome of the exercise will be submitted to the People Committee for consideration, including an analysis of patterns of application and success by gender, ethnicity, etc. If significant evidence emerges that suitably qualified academics are not applying under these arrangements, the People Committee will make proposals to Council to try to address this.

## 4.3 Unsuccessful Applications

Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a conversation to discuss feedback on their application. Feedback may also be included in decision letters at the end of the process. There is no right of appeal against decisions.

Unsuccessful applicants may reapply for title in subsequent exercises. It is strongly recommended that applicants seek the advice of the relevant head of department or faculty board chair before applying again. Applicants are advised that success in subsequent exercises will require additional evidence against the criteria. While an important publication (or the equivalent) may provide significance evidence within one year of an unsuccessful application, it is expected that the accumulation of evidence may take two or more years.

Departments and faculties should ensure that appropriate mentoring arrangements are put in place for applicants who are not awarded title. Particular consideration should be given to arrangements for mentoring individuals who have applied unsuccessfully on more than one occasion and for those who work overseas. Mentoring should assist potential applicants to understand the application process for the recognition of distinction, and the criteria and standards that a successful application would need to satisfy.